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COMPARATIVE
CHRONOLOGICAL STATEMENT
OF THE EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE
RIGHTS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND THE
CLAIMS OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE
OREGON TERRITORY.

ENGLAND.

1578-81. Sir Francis Drake discovered the north west coast of America, from Cape Mendocino to the 48° of north latitude.

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1712 Louis XIV. granted a patent to Antoine Crozat for the exclusive trade to Louisiana. The patent states, "that the territories possessed by the King are bounded by New Mexico and by the lands of the English in Carolina, and all the establishments, ports, harbours, rivers, especially the port and harbour of Dauphin Island, formerly called Massacre Island—the River St. Louis, formerly called Mississippi, from the sea coast to the Illinois country, together with the River St. Philip, formerly called the Missouri, and the St. Jerome, formerly called the Wabash, (the

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1768. Captain J. Carver, of Connecticut, (a subject of Great Britain) explored the sources of the Missouri and Mississippi. The object of his travels was "to establish a port in those parts about the strait of Anian, which having been discovered by Sir Francis Drake, of course belonged to England." Carver gave the name Oregon, to the north west coast, from an Indian name affixed to all the countries west of the Rocky Mountains.
1769. Mr. Hearne, an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, followed the course of the Copper Mine River to its termination at the Arctic Ocean.
1776. Captain Cook sails along the north west coast of America, from latitude 42° to latitude 70° .
1783. Acknowledgment of the Independance of the United States by Great Britain

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Ohio) with all the lands, countries, lakes in the land, and the rivers falling directly or indirectly into that part of the River St. Louis, shall be and remain comprised under the name of the government of Louisiana." (*See Map.*)

- 1762 France cedes Louisiana to Spain.

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and definition of the territorial limits of the states.

(See Map.)

- 1786. Several English ships trade for furs at Nootka Sound, and along the coast.
- 1786. Captain Meares visited the north west coast, and entered the mouth of the Columbia River; he named Cape Disappointment.
- 1789-92. Alexander Mackenzie, (a British subject,) explored the Copper Mine River from the Great Slave Lake to the sea.
- 1790. The right of Great Britain to the territories discovered by her subjects on the north west coast of America, acknowledged by Spain.* (*Treaty, Oct. 28.*)
- 1791-92. Vancouver sailed along the shores, and surveyed a long line of coast, including the entrance to the Columbia River.
- 1792. Lieut. Broughton, one of Vancouver's Lieutenants, took possession of the Columbia River and the adjoining country in the name of the King of England.

*Confirmed by the first additional article to the Treaty of 5th July, 1814.

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- 1789. The Americans appear, for the first time, on the shores of North West America—the ship Columbia, Captain Gray—Captain Kendrick arrives in Nootka Sound, and trades for furs.
- 1792. Capt. Gray, of Boston, enters the Columbia, which had formerly been visited by Meares and Vancouver.
- 1800. France again acquires by treaty, October 1st, the territory of Louisiana from Spain—"the same in extent as it was when France formerly possessed it."
- 1803. The United States pur-

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1804-5-6. The North West Fur Company established trading Posts on the main branches of the Columbia River.

1807. Convention signed at London between the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and the United States, for the settlement of Boundaries in America. The 5th Article states—That a “line drawn due north or south (as the case may require) from the most north western point of the Lake of the Woods, until it shall intersect the 49th parallel of north latitude, and from the point of such intersection due west along, and with the said parallel, shall be the dividing line between his Majesty’s territories and those of the United States; to the westward of the said Lake, as far as their respective territories extend in that quarter, and that the said line shall to that extent form the southern boundary of his Majesty’s said territories, and the northern boundary of the said territories of the United States. Provided, that nothing in the present article shall be considered

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chase Louisiana of the French Government.

1805-6. Messrs Clark and Lewis, penetrate from the head of the Missouri, to the mouth of the Columbia River.

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to extend to the north west Coast of America, or other territories belonging to or claimed by either party in the Continent of America to the westward of the Stony Mountains. This article was approved by both Governments. President Jefferson nevertheless wished that the proviso respecting the north west coast should be omitted, as it "could have little other effect than as an *offensive intimation to Spain that the claims of the United States extend to the Pacific Ocean.*"—*Letter July 30, 1807, from Mr. Madison, Secretary of State of the United States.*

1810. Abandonment of the Trading Posts on the Columbia, by the Missouri Fur Company.
The Americans enter into an arrangement with the Russians to abstain from trading with the natives of the North West Coasts.
1811. Mr. Thompson, and a party of Englishmen, arrive

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1808. Establishment of the Missouri Fur Company, on the head waters of the Lewis, and branches of the Columbia, (abandoned in 1816.)
1810. Formation of the Pacific Fur Company by John Jacob Astor.
1811. Foundation of Astoria, by the Pacific Fur Company.

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and take possession of lands on the Columbia.

1813. Astoria and all the Establishments, Furs, Stock in hand, &c., sold by the Americans, to the North West Company.

1813. British Sloop of War, Racoon, takes possession of Astoria, and calls it Fort George.

1814. Treaty between Great Britain and Spain. The first additional article confirms the treaty of 1790.

1817 Mr. Bagot, the British Envoy at Washington, protests against the occupation of Fort George by the Americans, "contending that the whole region belonged to Great Britain; having been early taken possession of in his Majesty's name, and been ever since considered as part of his Majesty's dominions; and that the

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at the mouth of the Columbia river.

1812. War declared by the United States against Great Britain.

1814. Peace of Ghent between Great Britain and the United States. 1st article of the treaty, states.— "All territories, places and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war, or which may be taken after the signing of this treaty. On excepting only the islands hereinafter mentioned shall be restored without delay."

1817. By virtue of this article in the treaty of Ghent, the Americans send the sloop of war Ontario to take possession of Astoria.

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establishment there made by American citizens, had been voluntarily abandoned under an agreement with the North West Company, and which had purchased their effects, had ever since retained possession of the coast.

1818. The English Government allow the Americans to re-occupy Astoria under protest, as the despatch of Lord Castlereagh to the British representative at Washington, states—"You will observe, that whilst this Government is not disposed to contest with the American Government the point of possession, as it stood in the Columbia River, at the moment of the rupture, they are not prepared to admit the validity of the title of the Government of the United States to this settlement. In signifying therefore, to Mr. Adams the full acquiescence of your Government in the re-occupation of the limited position which the United States held in that River at the breaking out of the war, you will at the same time, assert in suitable terms the claim of Great Britain to that territory, upon which the American

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1818. The Americans re-occupy Astoria.
1818. Convention between Gt. Britain and the United States. Article 3, states. "It is agreed, that any country that may be claimed by either party on the north west coast of America, westward of the Stony Mountains, shall, together with its harbours, bay, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free, and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the present convention, to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two powers: it being understood, that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of any other power or state to any part of the

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settlement must be considered an encroachment."

" Downing street,

" January, 27th, 1818.

" Intelligence having been received that the United States sloop of war Ontario has been sent by the American Government to establish a settlement on the Columbia River, which was held by that State on the breaking out of the last war, I am to acquaint you that it is the Prince Regent's pleasure, (without, however, admitting the right of that Government to the possession in question,) that, in pursuance of the first article of the treaty of Ghent, due facility should be given to the re-occupation of the said territory by the officers of the United States; and I am to desire that you would contribute, as much as lies in your power, to the execution of His Royal Highness's commands.

" I have, &c. &c.

" Bathurst."

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said country) the only object of the high contracting parties, in that respect, being to prevent disputes and differences among themselves.

1818. Negotiation between the United States and Spain, called the Florida Treaty.

1819. The boundary line between the two countries, west of the Mississippi, shall begin on the Gulf of Mexico, at the mouth of the River Sabine in the sea, continuing north,

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along the western bank of that river, to the 32° of latitude; thence by a line due north, to the degree of latitude where it strikes the Rio Roxo of Natchitoches, or Red River; then following the course of the Rio Roxo westward, to the degree of longitude 106° west from London, and 23° from Washington; then crossing the said Red River, and running thence by a line due north to the River Arkansas; thence following the course of the southern bank of the Arkansas to its source in latitude 42° north; and thence by that parallel of latitude to the South Sea; the whole as being laid down in Melish's Map of the United States, published at Philadelphia, improved to the 1st of January, 1818. But, if the source of the Arkansas River shall be found to fall north or south of latitude 42° , then the line shall run from the said source due north or south as the case may be, till it meet the said parallel of latitude 42° , and thence along the said parallel to the South Sea. All the Islands in the Sabine, and the said Red and Arkansas Rivers, throughout the

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1824. Negotiation between Gt. Britain and the United States. Proposition of Canning and Huskisson—
 "That the boundary between the territories of Great Britain and those of the United States, west of the Rocky Mountains, should be a line drawn from those mountains westward, along the 49th parallel, to the nearest head-waters of the Columbia, and thence down the middle of the stream to its termination in the Pacific: the British possessing the country north and west of such line, and the Americans that on the other side: *provided* that the citizens or subjects of both nations should be at liberty, during the next

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course thus described, to belong to the United States; but the use of the waters and the navigation of the Sabine to the sea; and of the said Rivers Roxo and Arkansas, throughout the extent of the said boundary, on their respective banks, shall be common to the respective inhabitants of both nations.

- 1820 Florida Treaty ratified.
 1820 Treaty with Mexico, Jan. 12.
 1821 Mexico declares her independence of Spain.

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ten years, to pass by land or by water through all the territories, and to retain and use their establishments already formed in any part of them. (This project was not agreed to by the American Government.)

1825. Treaty with Russia—It states the line of demarcation between the possession of the parties upon the coasts of the continent and the islands of America, in the north-west, is made to commence from the southernmost point of Prince of Wales's Island, in the latitude of 54° and 40° , and to run eastward to the Portland Channel, which it ascends to the 56° of latitude, thence it follows the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast, as far as the point of intersection of the 141° of longitude west from Greenwich, (passing through the west side of Mount Elias,) and continues along that meridian, northward, to the Arctic Ocean; but wherever the said summit of the mountains is more than ten leagues from the sea, the boundary runs parallel to the coast at the distance of ten leagues from it.

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The Russians are never to form an establishment south or east of this line, nor are the British to form any on the other side of it; but the British are to enjoy for ever the right of navigating all streams, which may cross the said boundary in their course from the interior of the continent to the sea. The navigation of the inland seas, gulfs, harbours, and creeks, on the coasts, for the purposes of fishing or of trading with the natives, is left free to both parties for ten years; and the port of Sitka, or New Archangel, is opened to British subjects during the same period.

1827. Convention with the United States—Providing “that all the provisions of the third article of the convention of Oct. 1818 should be indefinitely continued, in force, each party being however at liberty after the 20th Oct. 1828, to annul and abrogate the engagement on giving due notice of 12 months by either party.”

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1827. Convention with Great Britain.—“ART. 1.—All the provisions of the 3rd Article of the Convention concluded between the United States of America and his Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the 20th of October, 1818, shall be, and they are hereby further indefinitely extended and continued in force in the same manner as if all the provisions of the said article were herein specifically recited.

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"ART. 2.—It shall be competent, however, to either of the contracting parties, in case either should think fit, at any time after the 20th of October, 1828, on giving due notice of twelve months to the other contracting party, to annul and abrogate this Convention; and it shall in such case be accordingly entirely annulled and abrogated after the expiration of the said term of notice."

"ART. 3.—Nothing contained in this Convention, or in the 3rd article of the Convention of the 20th of October, 1818, hereby continued in force, shall be construed to impair, or in any manner affect, the claims which either of the contracting parties may have to any part of the country westward of the Stony or Rocky Mountains."

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THE Americans found their claim to the Oregon Territory—

1st—On the purchase of Louisiana from the French in 1803.

2nd—On the rights they acquired from Spain by the Florida Treaty.

3rd—From the discoveries and settlements of American citizens.

I. The purchase of Louisiana from the French, in 1803, can give no title to the Oregon and the district of the Columbia, as the boundaries of Louisiana never extended beyond the sources of the rivers Missouri and Mississippi, and if we give the fullest extent to the Louisiana claim, it was bounded by the Rocky Mountains. (*See Map.*)

II. The region acquired from Spain by the Florida Treaty.

The claim of Spain could arise only from the discoveries of her navigators. Sir Francis Drake was undoubtedly the first European who sailed along this part of the north west continent of America. The voyages of the Spanish navigators were subsequent to Drake's voyage.

Spain acknowledged the right of Great Britain to these territories, by the Convention of 1790, and confirmed the Convention of 1790 by the Treaty of 1814. The American Treaty with Spain was not ratified until 1820, so that, if Spain had any rights, Great Britain had acquired them by the prior cession.

III. From the discoveries and settlements of American citizens.

If priority of visitation gives the right to the territory, Sir Francis Drake visited the shores of this country in 1581, Captain Cook in 1777, Captain Meares in 1786, Vancouver and Broughton in 1791-2. The first American navigator did not appear until 1792. If exploration of the rivers and lands give the right to the territory, Captain Carver, a subject of England, had visited the source of the Oregon River in 1768. The North West Fur Company had established trading posts on the Columbia River in 1804; it was not until 1806 that Messrs. Clark and Lewis, an American expedition, passed down the valley of the Columbia to its entrance into the sea. If America contends that a proprietary title has been acquired by the first visitations and explorations of her citizens, she can only be entitled to a very small portion of the territory; inasmuch as her citizens have visited but a very small portion of the country—the greater part of it having been pre-visited by the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, who are the subjects of Great Britain. The Law of nations has hitherto been, "that the navigators of any nation, who first visited the shores of any country, acquired for their Sovereigns, whose subjects they were; not only the shores, but the rivers running into the seas they visit." Upon this principle have all the Colonial possessions of Spain, Portugal, France, England, and Russia been secured.

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